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# **BELA NEGARA MELALUI TRI DHARMA PERGURUAN TINGGI**

- » **Merah Putih Raksasa Untuk Hari Bela Negara**
- » **Maba Dapat Pemahaman Bela Negara di PP&K**
- » **Peningkatan Mutu dan Benchmarking**



# SOME CRITERIA OF GOOD TRANSLATION

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Referring to the previous article published in this magazine: API (July-Dec 2013: 31-32) on 'What is Translation?', here the writer would rather share a little bit more about it and another thing related. This article is written due to the fact that the writer has got so many bad experiences in accordance with translation work. Probably most of the ordinary people (those whose background knowledge is not English) never think that translation is such a very hard work to do and it does not need some specific skills. Therefore many of them tend not to give a good appreciation for this kind of job. When they want somebody else (translator) to translate their materials into their own target language or from foreign language into source language, they would rather find and ask anybody who is willing to be paid less expensive or much cheaper than keep on thinking of the more qualified work of translation. This seems to be very ironical, especially those who are concerned with scientific fields of study. They never think that the value of knowledge or science cannot be measured with any other thing.

As what many language experts said that translation is actually not such an easy work to do. This means that not all people can do this job properly even though those whose background knowledge of both source language and target language are quite good. They also said that the good mastery of both source language and target language does not guarantee that they are automatically able to accomplish this job well and produce qualified work of translation. That's why a professional translator would rather charge quite high for his translation work, otherwise he would rather not accept that job. They prefer taking some other jobs, such as teaching, because he thinks that translation work takes more and longer time. Moreover, many things or aspects are still required to be well prepared and considered to obtain a real good product of translation.

As we know that the objects or materials to translate are too broad. This fact makes it impossible for a translator master all of them at the same time. For example, the language or the terms used in medical science is much different from those of banking, engineering, and another field of study. Besides, some other specific skills are still required, such as mastering the culture of both source and target languages, grammatical structures, and the materials to translate of course. In short, the most important thing that the translator has to know is that to obtain the qualified work of translation should fulfill 3 (three) criteria: accuracy, acceptability, and readability.

## 1. Accuracy

Accuracy is much influenced whether the product of translation is accurate or not. Therefore, accuracy is closely related to the equivalence between source language and target language. The product of translation is considered to be accurate if it fulfills 3 (three) criteria, in terms of: a) lexical equivalence; b) natural; and c) closest. 'Translation consists of reproducing in the receptor's language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and secondly in terms of style', Nida (1969: 12). What the real meaning of 'accurate' is that the choice of words in target language should be equivalent with that of in the source language. 'Natural' means that the product of

translation should show the high naturalness in accordance with the norms and culture of the target language.



Meanwhile, 'closest' is the combination between the two aspects: 'equivalence and naturalness' that becomes the important indicator to obtain the accurate translation.

## 2. Acceptability

Acceptability is closely related to the naturalness, that is the appropriateness of grammatical structure used in the sentences, the textual norms, and culture used in the target language. Therefore, one product of translation is considered to have a high level of acceptability if it fulfills the rules, norms, and culture used in target language. Besides, every sentence in target language has also a contextual meaning, and it can be accepted logically in target language. Furthermore, the message that the writer wants to say and expose in source language can be understood well by the target reader. In other words, the sentences and other expressions that finally to form a text are acceptable and understandable by the target readers. Therefore, whether one text of translation is considered to be acceptable or not is much depended on the attitude and response of target readers.

## 3. Readability

Readability is closely related to the level of the reader's competence in comprehending the content of text he is reading. Meanwhile, the relationship between readability and translation cannot be separated each other. This is due to the fact that one product text of translation means nothing if the level of its readability is quite low or not readable (difficult to understand). Therefore, one text of translation will provide more beneficial and meaningful for many people if it has a high level of readability. In other words, the higher the level of readability of one translation text, the easier the target reader will catch the message or idea he is reading. On the other hand, the lower the level of readability of one translation text, the more difficult to understand or comprehend it is. Some factors that may cause one text is not readable are: a) the inaccurate choice of words. For example, the words are ambiguous (one word has more than one interpretations); uncommon or unusual words; b) The grammatical structure used is confusing. For example: the sentence is not complete; It is too long; The level of structure is not adjusted with the target reader. For example: Small children have to read some complex sentences; c) The plot of the story is not well ordered, or the idea is not logical (it is usually related to cohesion and coherence of the text).